

Listing and Amendments to the Claims

This is the current listing of the claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for staggercasting, comprising the steps of:
encoding a set of signals representing content, the set capable of being decoded to produce a corresponding set of decoded signals, each decoded signal having a quality different from the qualities of the decoded signals corresponding to the other encoded signals;

generating a composite signal comprising the set of encoded signals staggered in time;

extracting the set of encoded signals from the composite signal;

detecting errors in the set of extracted encoded signals to produce a subset of available extracted encoded signals which are not erroneous; and

decoding a content representative signal at a selectable desired quality;

wherein the step of generating a composite signal comprises the step of further including a signal carrying information about respective qualities of the encoded set of signals;

wherein the decoding step comprises the step of selecting the content representative signal at the desired quality automatically; and

wherein the step of selecting the desired quality automatically comprises the step of selecting the desired quality in response to preset selection parameters.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein if a content representative signal at the desired quality is not available, decoding a content representative signal at a selectable desired quality from the subset of available extracted encoded signals.

Cancel claim 3.

Cancel claim 4.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 [4] wherein the parameters are preset in response to user input.

Cancel claim 6.

Cancel claim 7.

Cancel claim 8.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 18 wherein the ~~television program~~ information carrying signal carries data representing either or both of a program map table (PMT) and a program and information systems protocol-virtual channel table (PSIP-VCT).

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the composite signal generating step comprises generating the set of encoded signals such that a lowest quality decoded signal is undelayed, and the other encoded signals are delayed with respect to the encoded signal corresponding to the lowest quality decoded signal such that the higher the quality of the corresponding decoded signal, the longer the delay period.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the encoding step comprises the step of encoding at least one of the set of encoded signals using a technique which is robust relative to the encoding of the other encoded signals.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the at least one robust encoded signal comprises the encoded signal corresponding to the lowest quality decoded signal.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the set of encoded signals are channel encoded, and the robust encoded signals are channel encoded using a channel coding technique robust relative to the channel coding technique used for the non-robust encoded signals.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the channel coding for the robust encoded signals is one of 4-VSB or 2-VSB modulation and the channel coding for the non-robust encoded signals is 8-VSB modulation.

15. (Currently amended) A staggercasting receiver, for receiving a composite signal comprising a set of encoded signals, staggered in time, representing content, the set capable of being decoded to produce a corresponding set of decoded signals, each decoded signal having a quality different from the qualities of the decoded signals corresponding to the other encoded signals, the receiver comprising:

a demultiplexer, responsive to the composite signal, for extracting the set of encoded signals, detecting errors in respective encoded signals for providing an error representative signal, and producing a subset of available extracted signals which are not erroneous;

a decoder, coupled to the demultiplexer and responsive to the error representative signal, for reproducing a content representative signal at a selectable desired quality;

wherein the composite signal further includes a signal carrying information about respective qualities of the encoded set of signals; and

wherein the decoder further comprises circuitry for storing preset selection parameters, and for automatically selecting the content representative signal at the desired quality in response to the selection parameters.

Cancel claim 16.

Cancel claim 17.

Cancel claim 18.

19. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim ~~15~~18 ~~wherein further comprising comprises~~ circuitry for storing selection parameters in response to user input.

Cancel claim 20.

21. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim ~~20~~15 further comprising an on-screen-display device for displaying an image representing information related to the encoded set of signals.

Cancel claim 22.

23. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim ~~15~~²² wherein the ~~television program~~—information carrying signal carries data representing either or both of a program map table (PMT) and a program and information systems protocol-virtual channel table (PSIP-VCT).

24. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim 15 wherein at least one of the set of encoded signals is encoded using a technique which is robust relative to the encoding of the other signals, and the decoder comprises a decoder, responsive to the at least one robust encoded signal, for decoding the at least one robust encoded signal.

25. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim ~~24~~⁴⁶ wherein the at least one robust encoded signal comprises the encoded signal corresponding to the lowest quality decoded signal.

26. (Currently amended) The receiver of claim ~~24~~⁴⁷ wherein:
the set of encoded signals are channel coded, and the robust encoded signals are channel encoded using one of 4-VSB or 2-VSB modulation and the other encoded signals are channel encoded using 8-VSB modulation; and
the decoder comprises a demodulator for channel decoding the robust encoded signals using one of 4-VSB or 2-VSB demodulation and channel decoding the other encoded signals using 8-VSB demodulation.

27. (Original) The receiver of claim 15 wherein
the composite signal comprises the set of encoded signals such that a lowest quality decoded signal is undelayed, and the other encoded signals are delayed with respect to the encoded signal corresponding to the lowest quality decoded signal such that the higher the quality of the corresponding decoded signal, the longer the delay period; and

the receiver further comprising a plurality of delay circuits, coupled between the demultiplexer and the decoder and respectively responsive to the set of extracted encoded signals, for realigning the extracted encoded signals in time.